



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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October Is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
Women's Way May Provide a Way To Pay for Early Detection Screenings.

BISMARCK, N.D. – October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month. Statistics show that one out of eight women in North Dakota will get breast cancer in her lifetime. According to The American Cancer Society, an estimated 440 North Dakota women will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer this year.

The best way to find breast cancer early is through yearly mammograms and clinical breast exams. *Women's Way*, North Dakota's breast and cervical cancer early detection program, may provide a way to pay for mammograms and Pap tests. The program helps women who have limited incomes or who do not have insurance to receive yearly mammograms and regular Pap test screenings. Women who enroll in *Women's Way* usually receive the screening services from the doctor or clinic they select. It's estimated that 24,000 North Dakota women may be eligible for *Women's Way*.

Screenings through *Women's Way* are available to eligible women ages 40 through 64 and include clinical breast exams, Pap tests and pelvic exams. Women ages 50 to 64 also receive mammograms.

Women's Way provided cancer-screening services to 8,848 women from September 1997 through September 2007. Through those screenings, 143 breast cancers and 800 cervical cancers and pre-cancers were found.

Please note: An article about a Women's Way client follows.

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Westhope Woman Tells Women To Make Time For Mammograms

BISMARCK, N.D. – It had been 10 years since Paula Mundt, Westhope, N.D., had a mammogram or Pap test. “I know these screenings are important, but then, everything; your husband, your house, your job, everything seems more important and you just don’t take time to take care of yourself. This isn’t a good thing,” Paula said.

In October of 2000, Paula happened upon the county nurse at the senior center and asked the nurse about the pink ribbon on her lapel. That little pink ribbon, a symbol of breast cancer support, opened the door to talk about the importance of yearly mammograms to detect and treat breast cancer early. It also opened the door for Paula to learn about *Women’s Way*, North Dakota’s breast and cervical cancer early detection program that provides low or no cost mammograms and Pap tests for women ages 40 through 64 who meet income criteria, are underinsured, or who have no insurance.

Paula signed up for *Women’s Way*, and within the year she helped three other women sign-up. “*Women’s Way* sure takes the burden off your mind about paying for mammograms and Pap tests. Just knowing you’ve gone in for screenings makes you feel real good,” Paula said.

In 2001, Paula found a lump in her breast. When she went to the doctor for her regular breast and cervical cancer screenings that year, he also found the lump and ordered further testing. “I knew about the lump, but I wasn’t going to tell him because I just didn’t want it to be there. I was in a panic,” Paula said. She called her local *Women’s Way* coordinator who helped her understand the ultrasound process. “*Women’s Way* helped me through the panic and gave me an opportunity to do that follow-up work. I probably wouldn’t have done it without them because of the expenses,” she said.

The follow-up testing clarified that Paula’s lump was not cancer. The next year, she fully learned the importance of taking care of oneself.

Paula discovered just how much she was needed when her husband was severely injured in a worksite accident. Having fallen from an oil rig, Paula’s husband broke nearly every bone in his body and suffered brain swelling. She was by his side and helped him recover from the near-fatal fall. “I need to stay well to take care of him. I’m looking forward to him getting better and to us growing old together,” Paula said.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month. Statistics show that one out of eight women in North Dakota will get breast cancer in her lifetime. According to The American Cancer Society, an estimated 440 North Dakota women will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer this year.

Women’s Way may provide a way to pay for mammograms and Pap tests. North Dakota women ages 40 through 64 may be eligible for clinical breast exams, Pap tests and pelvic exams. North Dakota women ages 50 through 64 also may be eligible for mammograms. *Women’s Way* has screened 8,843 women since 1997. Through these screenings, 143 breast cancers and 800 cervical cancers and pre-cancers have been detected.

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Today, Paula's husband is getting better and is visiting the workshop he spent so much time in before the accident. Paula stays busy reading and canning vegetables from her garden. She makes sure to get her yearly mammogram and regular Pap tests. "We have to take care of ourselves. If you don't have the finances or if you are scared, *Women's Way* is there to help you. The people that work for *Women's Way* are very knowledgeable and friendly and they make you feel like you aren't alone. They go that extra mile. There is just no reason not to use *Women's Way*," she said.

For more information about *Women's Way*, call 1-800-44 WOMEN or visit the *Women's Way* website at www.ndhealth.gov/womensway.

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This news release and a photo of Paula Mundt are available for download at <http://www.health.state.nd.us/womensway/mediaservices/info/media%20kit/wwmediakit.html>

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